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NAPOLÉON'S PLANS FOR A COLONIAL SYSTEM¹

THE close of the Seven Years' War saw Great Britain in the ascendant wherever, throughout the globe, she had come into hostile contact with France. But the balance of 1756 was somewhat redressed in favor of the French by the success of our Revolution. During the years from 1783 to 1792 French history was concerned almost entirely with financial matters, and when the cost had been reckoned of the slender prestige gained in the American war, a contest in which, as both British and French firmly believed, the death-blow had been given to the world-empire of Great Britain, it was found that not the least of impending disasters for France was that of another world-wide war and empty pockets. Between 1792 and 1815 one coalition after another was hurled upon France and her life was one of shocks and spasms. Through these she passed staggering and often hysterical, occupied in the main by the thought of self-preservation but yet concerned from the beginning and at intervals thereafter with a sense of obligation to restore and consolidate a colonial empire.

Accordingly the Revolution had scarcely begun its career when the French India Company was abolished and all its offices incorporated with those of the government. When war was declared in 1793 Brissot announced as part of his programme the annihilation of British power in the East. The Treaty of Versailles had not only restored to France her five Indian dependencies, it had given her a finer and more compact territory in that peninsula than she had before controlled. With anything like unity of plan and harmony of action, she might hope to array under her banners native populations sufficiently numerous and strong to embarrass if not to rout the British power, engaged as it was, to the north, in a life and death struggle with the Mahrattas and with Scinde, the main support of which latter state was the famous Savoyard adventurer,

¹ J. Tessier in *Revue Historique*, XV. 349-381; H. Adams, *ibid.*, XXIV. 92-130. Sassenay, *Napoléon I^{er} et la Fondation de la République Argentine*. In this volume the reader will find an account of the sources and a bibliography, together with some unpublished documents. Extended examination of other unpublished papers, both letters written by Napoleon himself and the diplomatic correspondence of his time, has yielded a scanty harvest, but it affords a reasonable assurance that what is of value relating to Napoleon's colonial schemes is here given in outline.—This paper was read before the American Historical Association at its recent meeting at New Haven.

Benoît de Boigne. Hyder Ali and Tippoo Sahib were antagonists equally redoubtable in the peninsula proper. Their conduct was largely controlled by French revolutionary influences. Seringapatam was the seat of a powerful and active Jacobin club, the leading spirit of which was one Ripaud, a swaggering adventurer claiming to represent the French revolutionary government. By 1790 the revolutionary movement was dominant in Pondicherry and popular representative institutions were established. The well-trying leaders were promptly deposed, jarring and factional politics were rife among not only the settlers but the natives, and when the English general Floyd appeared in 1793, the town fell without having made any adequate resistance. When Wellesley, afterward Lord Wellington, captured Seringapatam in 1799, just about the time when Bonaparte was invading Syria and the Russians were crossing into northern Italy, the Indian victory of the British was everywhere regarded as a staggering blow at Revolutionary France. It is estimated that, counting all the troops organized and fighting as regulars under French officers in India, there were collectively in the respective services of the Begum (Sombre), of Tippoo, of the Nizam, of the Scindia and of the Holkar, not fewer than 60,000, and that perhaps 150,000 Hindus were more or less under the spell of their example and possibly available in a crisis. Of these men, not merely were the Asiatic masters hopelessly divided but the European leaders were likewise enemies one of the other, being some Jacobin, some extreme royalist reactionaries. They quarrelled, and instead of uniting in a great French movement, degenerated into mercenaries with little or no influence. This was partially due to the diplomacy of the British, which in every tactical move managed to deal some stroke which further weakened or disunited the French adventurers.

The failure of Bonaparte's Egyptian expedition would presumably have ended French pretensions in the East; the more so because a British Indian expedition, composed in part of a few European regiments, but mainly of 6000 sepoys, actually assumed the aggressive, embarked at Bombay and landed in May 1801 at Kosseir in the teeth of the French fortress constructed there by Belliard, descended the Nile and early in August formed a junction at Cairo with a British force from England. Yet in spite of this startling phenomenon, viz. : the revelation of a power in British India not content with maintaining itself, but strong enough for offensive aggression, the First Consul lent a willing ear to the projects of the Czar Paul for a joint land expedition against India. Nay, more, he carefully studied them. Both his criticisms and the rejoinders of Paul are in existence. Each "of the two most powerful nations of the

world" was to furnish 35,000 men. The forces were to meet at Astrakhan, whence, under the leadership of Masséna, they were to advance toward the Indus. The journey, it was thought, would be little more than a pleasure excursion, for with a free hand presents would be showered on all the petty chiefs and sovereigns encountered by the way; learned men would explain in the various vernaculars that the sole object of the march was to expel the British from India; specialists in all branches of natural science should observe the strange new flora, fauna and climates with a lavish equipment of instruments of precision, from among which balloons were not excluded. Thus the lines of commerce would be open to Russian and French enterprise, while simultaneously a deadly foe would be mortally wounded in his vital extremities. Paul's advance guard actually crossed the Volga on the ice in March, 1801; but his untimely death (he was murdered on March 23) put an end to the "Grand Project," as the originator designated it.

Still Bonaparte was undismayed, and at the close of the same year, before the peace of Amiens was signed, he had selected an agent to represent French interests in India. His choice fell upon General Decaen, a man who had fought gallantly at Hohenlinden and who was considered to have in him the making of a second Dupleix. A plan was discussed, studied and matured, whereby on June 18, 1802, Decaen was appointed "Captain-General of the French Establishment in the Indies." But there was a long standing quarrel between Decaen and Decrès, minister of the navy. More or less friction arose even under the watchful eye of the Chief-Magistrate, who would tolerate no open rupture. It was therefore not until March 5, 1803, that the little expedition was actually ready, and sailed. Decaen's instructions were to avoid rousing any anxiety in the minds of the Anglo-Indian leaders and carefully to conceal the views of his government. If any new proof were needed of the scarcely concealed contempt in which Bonaparte held the peace of Amiens it could be found not only in the selection for such an office of a man like General Decaen, an avowed fire-eating Anglophobe who had repeatedly and urgently requested a mission to India, only that he might fight the English, but also in the text of the instructions given to the general, a paper written nine months after the peace of Amiens was signed, but cogitated and studied even before that short truce was negotiated. Decaen was to put himself in communication with whatever Indian peoples wore the English yoke with the least patience; six months after his arrival he was to set forth in a memoir his views as to maintaining himself in the peninsula, should war break out; lastly he was carefully to

examine the problem of how and whither he could retreat in case France should not secure the mastery of the seas. The composition of his expeditionary force was even more significant. There were 1250 men, half French troops, half negro soldiers who had fought in Guadeloupe. But there were no less than seven generals and a corresponding number of lower-grade officers. It was clear to every English observer that a powerful native army was to be formed under French superiors. On the outward journey Decaen carefully reconnoitered the Cape of Good Hope, but found to his disillusionment that though again in Dutch hands there was a powerful body of public opinion much more favorable to Great Britain than to Holland. The numerous British troops stationed there during British occupation had not merely been acclimatized to good purpose for use in India, but had powerfully influenced the imaginations of the settlers and had directed their attention to the value of British connections. It was clear that when the truce was broken the colony would immediately revert to Great Britain unless measures were at once taken to fortify it against British seizure, and this he urged in his dispatches.

When finally on July 11, 1803, Decaen's ship reached Pondicherry he found to his dismay that the British flag had not been lowered, and further that one of his consorts which, not having called at the Cape, had already arrived, was anchored between two British men-of-war. Negotiations with a view to landing the French and the cession of the five settlements had already been commenced; they were continued with such pressure as Decaen could bring to bear and lasted until September, when the news of the rupture of the Treaty of Amiens was officially communicated by the British authorities to the French, with the statement that the expedition must be considered as prisoners of war. This, of course, applied only to the portion still at Pondicherry with Benoît, for under advices from Paris Decaen with the larger part had slipped away to establish himself as commander of the naval station in the Islands of France and Réunion. There, for eight long years, he harassed English commerce as best he might with swift and implacable corsairs. And what man could do by emissaries, bribes, and every known means of secret diplomacy to keep alive French feeling in India, he did with fiery zeal. His mission belongs like the others which we are cataloguing to the list of Napoleon's futile enterprises.

But the real compensation for French losses in the Orient was to be found, as Bonaparte fondly hoped, in the new world. There are two opinions as to what the scheme of the First Consul really

was : Thiers thinks that he had centred his hopes in Louisiana, but most historians believe he had reverted to the traditional French policy and had not abandoned the thought of San Domingo, as central to a vast French colonial system in the West. It was as early as 1795 that the French Republic forced on Spain the reluctant cession of her portion of that island. On the prospect of temporary peace, in August, 1800, two months before the preliminary negotiations were opened, Berthier was sent to Madrid to secure the cession of Louisiana ; for the next three years Napoleon pursued with tenacity a policy which sought by every possible means to make San Domingo, Guadeloupe and Martinique independent for their necessities of all other sources of supply than Louisiana. He hoped to knit into a firm commercial, social, and political union the French possessions of the Antilles and the main land, cutting out the United States altogether or at least as far as possible from the rich commerce which they carried on with the islands. The strength of this plan in time of peace is perfectly evident ; its weakness in time of war, when the sea power of Great Britain would again be in the ascendant, is likewise clear. It is the latter consideration which leads those who can see no spot on the sun of Napoleon's greatness to conclude that his main object was the firm establishment of Louisiana as a centre of French power.

By October 7, 1801, on the very heels of the ratification of the peace preliminaries, the expedition to suppress Toussaint Louverture and inaugurate the new colonial policy was ready. The scheme, even as far as known to the public, was regarded as of the first importance. If successful, negro supremacy would be ended, the institution of slavery restored and the patriarchal system of white planters everywhere re-established. In so far as popular or quasi-popular government under negro leadership had been identified in the western world with French republicanism, its suppression at the hands of the French republican soldiers who formed the core of the expedition, under the leadership of the First Consul's brother-in-law at that, would be a terrific blow at the radical side of the Revolution. On the basis of this fact Talleyrand, at the First Consul's dictation, appealed secretly on November 13, to the court of St. James for its consideration, while in his exposé of the public affairs (November 22) and to Toussaint himself Bonaparte evasively and by suggestion held out the hope of complete liberty for all his subject colonial populations. This double-dealing cannot be too strongly stigmatized, but the effort was virtually approved by the other great powers, who knew the truth and perhaps thought that the restoration of the aristocratic system in the French colonies

would react on France herself. It may be remarked in passing that no portions of the St. Helena reminiscences of Napoleon are more misleading than those in which this great colonial enterprise is discussed. Its failure is attributed to Leclerc's disregard of instructions in identifying himself with the white creoles while dealing too liberally with the black and mulatto leaders and too harshly with the negro masses ; in particular the great memorialist appeals for the justification of his own plan to a decree of 1801 assuring liberty to the negroes of San Domingo, Guadeloupe and Martinique ; there is no such decree and that of like date a year later in 1802, to which manifestly he intended to refer, re-establishes slavery in Guadeloupe ! Decrès, writing under Bonaparte's instructions to Richepanse, the French agent in Guadeloupe, on July 16, 1802, eighteen months after the date of Leclerc's instructions, enjoins his correspondent to let the "yoke of wholesome prejudice" under which the blacks have been kept in subordination, continue to weigh heavily upon them. To prevent effectually any extension or perpetuation of native organization in behalf of liberty or even independence, the black and mulatto leaders were to be deported. In short, Bonaparte believed with others that slavery was the one corner-stone upon which his colonial system could rest ; all his talk at the time about freedom was a pretext to blind the French radicals at home, and his attempted exculpation of himself at St. Helena was nicely calculated with a view to win the English Whigs.

While the First Consul clearly understood how indispensable American friendship was in the development of his enterprise and had negotiated the convention of September 30, 1800, in order to remove all friction with the United States, yet he was aware that the commercial relations between them and the Antilles must be severed. Leclerc complained bitterly (Leclerc to Decrès, February 9, 1802) that rebellion was fomented and supplies furnished to the rebels by the Americans. The latter, he declared, hoped for nothing short of independence for the Antilles in order that they might monopolize the rich trade.

So loud were the complaints of Leclerc that they embarrassed the French agents elsewhere, and Pichon the *chargé d'affaires* at Washington reproved him. The pathetic tale of Toussaint Louverture, the negro leader in San Domingo—of his betrayal into the hands of his enemies and his death in exile, is an episode of French history utterly disgraceful to the actors in it. The martyr was terribly avenged. Overwhelmed by defeat and calamity Leclerc died on November 2, 1802, a victim of the yellow fever, and Rochambeau, as his successor, had a career of mismanagement and cruelty fol-

lowed by almost unexampled disaster. But in the interim Bonaparte builded zealously on his colonial structure. On October 15, 1802, the King of Spain under strong pressure signed the cession of Louisiana ; on November 26 the First Consul approved the secret instructions to Victor, who was to be captain-general of Louisiana, an acquisition, it was now explained, which was destined to render the Antilles independent of the United States ; and on the day following he offered to the King of Spain an exchange :—Parma in return for the coast of the Gulf of Mexico, all the way around from the river St. Mary's on the Atlantic to the Bravo del Norte, the boundary of Mexico. This would consolidate his great self-contained and self-sustaining colonial system by effectually and permanently excluding the United States from the Gulf. Nay more, the Spanish colonies would be the subordinate complement of the French, and from both not only American but English influences would be absolutely cut off. Such was Bonaparte's magnificent plan for the expansion of his world-empire. It must not be forgotten that Louisiana as he received it from Spain was what Spain had received from France ; it was not confined in its pretensions to the basin of the Mississippi in its widest extent, but claimed Texas with the Gulf coast and an extension to the Pacific on the far northwest. There is still in existence an outline description containing these pretensions. It is in the French Foreign Office in a corrected draft and, though unsigned, appears to have been the work of Marbois.

The first check to this grand colonial plan came on December 19, when the receipt of alarming news from San Domingo compelled the expedition thither of part of those troops which had been intended for Victor and Louisiana. The loss was unimportant in one sense, because even the two thousand men reserved for Victor were intended rather to adorn the captain-general's dignity than as a means of forcible offense. This is clear because Laussat, the envoy sent to take possession, went alone ; there could be no resistance on the return of a French possession to French administration.

Very specious arguments to prove that the rupture of the peace of Amiens was not the work of Napoleon might be based upon the fact that for the successful development of this vast scheme peace was essential, and that he confessed it to be so in a dispatch to London intended for the British government, and dated November 13, 1801. But the question of overt responsibility for the renewal of European war is too complex for such a simple solution. Without a moment's rest throughout the interval of peace the Consul and Emperor incorporated successively Poland, Piedmont, Switzerland, Parma and minor domains like Elba into his European system.

England would give up neither Malta nor, as we have seen, the five settlements of India. The United States began to display uneasiness over the occupation of Louisiana. The San Domingo expedition was manifestly to be a failure or at best a far too costly success: thirty thousand men was an awful sacrifice to make in a single year. It grew more and more manifest that with the increasing irritation and menacing armaments of Great Britain success in two hemispheres was impossible and that the better chance lay nearer home in the eastern.

There is no evidence whatever that Napoleon thought lightly or flippantly of colonial expansion. If the greatest of all the expeditions in which he was engaged, that to Egypt, be regarded rather as a blow at Great Britain than as primarily a colonial enterprise, and this is the fact, yet even in connection with the military arrangements of an offensive movement there were elaborate preparations for settlement and administration. The expedition of Decaen though likewise a side-stroke at England was primarily intended to restore the glories of French rule in India. The second treaty of San Ildefonso, it must also be remembered, enlarged the borders of French Guiana at the expense of Spanish America. As to the Louisiana enterprise, on the contrary, it cannot be asserted that except in the most indirect way there was any thought of hampering Great Britain. Yet the published correspondence of Napoleon teems with evidence of the care and forethought with which preparations for permanent settlement were made. The expenditure of money and energy was enormous, and it was to those bound to him by marriage that he entrusted the Herculean task. Lanfrey's view that the whole scheme was merely a method of sending troublesome republicans to die in exile, borders on the absurd. Republican soldiers were chosen because they were the veterans. As to the voluminous correspondence of Napoleon not included in the great collection, all of which I have examined, there is a just proportion of attention to colonial affairs both on the military and administrative side. Even in the hour of his deep humiliation and when the edifice of his empire was crumbling he had agents working and suffering for the colonial expansion of France. We must, therefore, utterly reject the notion that Napoleon lightly abandoned the idea of French hegemony in Latin America. In fact this policy was considered by Napoleon III. to be a clause in his uncle's political will. When the time came the great Napoleon made his choice, to be sure, with no sign of the agony which he must have felt in abandoning his American schemes. But this was characteristic. He could endure no exhibition of failure, no "spot on his uniform," as he called it. His

demeanor in the sale of Louisiana to the United States was so jaunty that he deceived even the elect. But the plan itself had been as far-sighted as any he had ever formed. He told his most intimate counsellor, Marbois, that he desired by the sale to thwart Great Britain and keep her from seizing it;¹ his offer was the first in that series of shrewd and crafty measures whereby the War of 1812 was brought on, and the embryonic nationality of the United States was started on its evolution into a first-class power. To Napoleon it seemed clear that American development would produce a maritime rival of Great Britain, which might in time destroy her ascendancy on the seas, or at least counterbalance it in a measure and open the channels of trade to the continental nations, which possessed less genius for sea-faring than the two Anglo-Saxon rivals. That he ceded not a part but the whole territory and broke his promise to Spain is a fact which has been interpreted as proving both a desire to spite the power which had so often thwarted him, and a determination to efface the memory of his colonial failure from the minds of men. The latter proposition may have some truth in it, but the former lacks all proof. He intended, as his whole career proved, and in particular, as the events of 1808 at Bayonne conclusively demonstrate, eventually to assume the supremacy over all Spain's possessions. It was not likely that he would spite himself and trouble his whole future policy by any gratuitous or unnecessary diminution of Spanish lands in America; yet he sold us, not merely New Orleans and Louisiana, but also a claim to the Spanish lands of West Florida and Texas. This he unquestionably did to prevent Great Britain from securing control of the Gulf, a weapon which he preferred to see in our hands during the coming struggle, even at the price of our retaining it permanently. More than any other policy this would hamper England and set free all his own resources for European warfare.

The next and last of Napoleon's colonial enterprises was also connected with Spanish America. No sooner had he rid himself as he supposed of the Spanish Bourbons at Bayonne, in 1808, than he turned his attention to the question of how he might best secure for the house of Napoleon ascendancy in the Spanish colonies of America. The flight of the royal family of Portugal to Brazil, though apparently a triumph for French diplomacy, was probably the gravest of those disasters which in the end overwhelmed the Napoleonic Continental System. Their establishment at Rio Janeiro opened markets to Great Britain which relieved the glut of her store-houses, saved British manufacturers from bankruptcy, and at the danger-

¹ Livingston to Madison, May 12, 1803, *American State Papers, Foreign Relations*, II.

point restored the credit of the country to a certain extent. It looked as if the ruin of Portugal in Europe might work the ruin of France through America. The opportunity to save himself occurred to Napoleon by means of one of that interesting class of French gentlemen-adventurers who in foreign lands survived the decadence of their class at home.

The France of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries teemed with children, and was in the enjoyment of a surplus population as turbulent, hungry and enterprising as any that ever came from the womb of Germany or England. When Colbert had established the French navy, he proceeded with magnificent enterprise to found colonies in one unbroken succession. Canada with Newfoundland, Louisiana, the Antilles and the islands of East Africa were attached to the French monarchy, while in 1688 the first settlement of Frenchmen in India inaugurated a splendid career for French adventurers. For some generations the French continued to furnish numerous and excellent colonists; this, too, in spite of the coalition of England with Holland, to prevent the union of the Spanish with the French crown. Even though the Peace of Utrecht deprived France of Newfoundland, Hudson's Bay and Nova Scotia, yet in the middle of the last century, while Great Britain held only the Atlantic seaboard of the temperate zone in North America, France had all the great river valleys of the continent, and in India she far outstripped Great Britain. Moreover it was Dupleix who made the modern British system in India possible. To him is due the idea of native Oriental troops, with European officers. It is estimated that the commercial marine of France during the earlier years of the reign of Louis XV. brought in two hundred and fifty million livres a year. This splendid inheritance the prodigal dissipated and the tale of French colonial decadence has been outlined in another connection. The bottom of the decline was reached when, by his code, Napoleon compelled the division of estates and thus made the "two-child family" characteristic of France, and when by his wars he united all Europe in the desire to despoil France of everything, including her colonies. In 1815 she retained but slender colonial strength and that little mainly through the adroitness of Talleyrand: some of the Antilles, Cayenne, Réunion, Pondicherry and Chandernagor.

The men who had earned their livelihoods in the conduct of French colonial affairs abroad found life intolerable at home, as their sphere of activity contracted more and more. According they took service wherever they could find it. Among these adventurers was a cadet of a noble Poitevin family, Jacques de Liniers, who was trained in what was then the most brilliant mil-

itary school in all Europe, the court of Ximenes, Grand Master of Malta. There he learned Spanish thoroughly; afterwards he served under O'Reilly in the Spanish expedition of 1774 against Algiers. Thereupon he entered the French Naval School, passed his examinations as ensign, fought on various vessels of the French fleet throughout the war of the American Revolution, and at the siege of Gibraltar. When the Treaty of Versailles was signed he again joined the Spanish fleet in a second unlucky expedition against Algiers and for his service was made a captain in the Spanish navy. In this service he crossed to Montevideo, and spent about twelve busy but uneventful years as a colonial agent under the Spanish government. Great Britain was much concerned to open all South American ports to her commerce as an offset to the almost entire loss of her continental trade in Europe. The Spanish viceroyalty of the Rio de la Plata included the vast districts now designated by the names of Bolivia, Paraguay, Uruguay and the Argentine. From 1796 to 1802 De Liniers managed to keep under control this extended and sparsely-settled land, known in England as the Plate Country. This he did by means of a flotilla of mosquito gunboats and cruisers, which scoured the sea-coast and rivers; for the next three years he was governor of the district known as Paraguay, and from 1805 to 1808 he was stationed at Buenos Ayres, as commander of the gunboats he had equipped to repel the British.

This task grew daily more difficult after the rupture of the peace of Amiens. Finally, on June 10, 1806, a powerful British fleet under Popham and Beresford, six frigates, three corvettes and five transports with 1400 picked troops, appeared unexpectedly in the Plate River. The wretched colony was then under a faithful but incapable viceroy, the Marquis of Sobremonte. He and De Liniers gathered a handful of the few regulars scattered up and down through the country into the nucleus of an army and called out for a supplementary force, such militia as could be assembled. Owing mainly to the daring and dash of Beresford, and to the hopes of commercial advantage which Admiral Popham held out, in formally granting to the people of the viceroyalty free trade with Great Britain, the invaders at first met with considerable success; but De Liniers was indefatigable in his agitations far and near throughout the more settled portions of the Argentine district, and eventually recalled the population almost *en masse* to their Spanish allegiance. With a little band of recruits not more numerous than the veteran soldiers of his foe, he began his attacks on the British and with each successful movement in advance attracted more and more vol-

unteers, until finally, on August 12, he overwhelmed and captured Beresford's little army at Buenos Ayres, with its ammunition, arms and standards. During these exciting events Sobremonte was absent in the interior. The messengers charged with the news of De Liniers' exploit found the viceroy marching towards the coast, at the head of three thousand men, a force which he had raised during his absence; they had to communicate unwelcome tidings, the voice of public opinion demanded that De Liniers should thereafter be first in military command, and to this a grudging assent was extorted from the tardy viceroy. The government at Madrid in due course confirmed the popular choice.

To Napoleon De Liniers wrote somewhat later that the recapture of Buenos Ayres had been nothing, the difficulty was to keep it; and to this task the commander bent all his energies, fortifying, collecting cannon, guns and ammunition, raising new troops and consolidating the loyalty, which, turning for the hour against the feebleness of Spain, considered the Frenchman as the saviour not only of Argentina but of the neighboring lands in South America. His exertions were terrible and the sacrifices of the people unsurpassed in the history of popular uprising. The colony, with no help from Spain and no regard for the policy of the mother country, devised and established its own safeguards. It felt itself virtually independent of the wretched court administration, nominally guided by the unhappy King Charles IV. but really left to the incapacity of Godoy, the queen's favorite, who wore the titles of Prime Minister and Prince of the Peace.

The independent feeling of the Argentine was further strengthened by the repulse of the second British expedition. In successive installments nearly 12,000 soldiers had been sent in from England and the Cape to overwhelm the South Americans. Whitelocke, a court favorite of no ability, was in military command. The efforts of the newcomers to land were successful, and in the British fleet which was to co-operate were no fewer than twenty ships. The combined army and navy presented a formidable aspect on June 28, 1807, when ready for offensive operations. It seems likely that De Liniers had by this time been approached by Napoleon, either through secret agents or by letter; in the previous year he had written to the Emperor, and now he made two reports of his resistance, one to Godoy, one to Napoleon; that to King Charles IV. was signed by the *cabildo* or elective council of Buenos Ayres, an institution which was a survival of the medieval liberties of Castile. From these three documents it appears that De Liniers did not entirely rise to the height of his task. In the open, around Buenos Ayres, he dis-

played over-confidence and met with repulse, but when the city was actually menaced on July 4, 1807, by a force of 8500 British, the inhabitants rose in a body at his call. The effort of Whitelocke to storm Buenos Ayres on the fifth was ill-judged. There was a magnificent display of courage on the part of his men and in some districts of the town his subordinates were partially successful, but the infuriated people fought like tigers from windows and barricades, the loss of life was frightful and De Liniers, whose valor had made him more conspicuous than ever, proposed towards evening, in the name of humanity, a cessation of hostilities, promising that he would restore to the British all the prisoners captured, both that day and the year before, on condition that the entire Plate country including Montevideo should be freed. Whitelocke tried by protracting the negotiation to gain time for his reserve to come in, but his scheme was too patent. The fighting was renewed and the British gained a slight advantage, but with such loss as to prove their case desperate, and on the seventh a treaty was signed on De Liniers' terms. For this signal victory De Liniers was appointed viceroy. For the failure of their enterprise Whitelocke was permanently disgraced and Popham received a formal reprimand.

The new viceroy soon found himself in an almost impossible position. His people had tasted the sweets of independent action and the delights of democracy. From contact with the English they had learned to discourse of commercial liberty. The *cabildo*, composed of men of pure Spanish race, was the very head and front of the popular movement, which, though recognizing De Liniers' services, was indisposed to respect the royal authority which he now represented. In particular, Godoy was even more despised and hated in South America than in Spain, if that were possible. To hold the wise balance of his power De Liniers therefore would have required not merely the dash and devotion of the medieval soldier, which he was, but the tact of a modern diplomat, which he was not. But few vessels from Spanish ports escaped the vigilance of the British cruisers, so that communications were most irregular. It was May 1808 when De Liniers received his formal appointment; two months later came the news of the revolution of Aranjuez, which deposed the reigning King of Spain. Supposing that Charles IV.'s abdication was final, De Liniers felt safe in preparing to proclaim his son, the popular Ferdinand, as seventh of his name among the kings of Spain. This measure at least, he felt certain, would meet with something like general approval. During the years of his service as coast guardian at Montevideo and Buenos Ayres, De Liniers had formed a wide acquaintance with men of all nations.

Among his fellow-countrymen he had known two in particular, Jurien, afterwards the distinguished admiral, and De Sassenay, a nobleman who, having lost his lands and having taken refuge in the United States, had made two voyages to South America as supercargo. During the course of the first De Sassenay spent six months in Buenos Ayres and the second venture proving troublesome he was compelled to reside in that city nearly two years, from September 1801 to May 1803. During both these periods he was on terms of intimacy with De Liniers. Finally in 1804 he succeeded after infinite pains and annoyance in securing amnesty from Bonaparte. Returning to his native land he bought in such of his paternal estates as were in the market and settled down, as he supposed, to the life of a country gentleman. His life in that capacity proved in many respects unsuccessful and vexatious, and he contemplated returning to America, actually making the effort to negotiate an exchange of his French estates for a Virginia domain. At last in 1806 he abandoned all idea of a second exile and began a course of improvements and investments which he hoped would restore his fortunes.

De Sassenay's career as an émigré was of course well known to the French authorities. No sooner had Napoleon secured the abdication of the Spanish Bourbons, at Bayonne, than he sent an order post-haste to Chalons-sur-Saône, where Sassenay lived, to summon the astonished and, as he believed himself to be, obscure personage to the imperial presence. Bayonne was reached on May 29, 1808, and amazement gave way to stupor when the Emperor in an interview lasting but a few minutes, with curt and meaning phrase, informed his visitor that in twenty-four hours he must be on the way to South America. The thousands of miles of stormy sea, rendered unsafe by remorseless English cruisers, were to be traversed in a little brig of a few hundred tons, the *Consolateur*. She actually put to sea next day, May 30, and on board was the Marquis of Sassenay, with full instructions from Champagny, Minister of Foreign Affairs. The shock and despair of his wife and family when they received the news by imperial messenger can be imagined. Perhaps no incident in Napoleon's whole career better revealed a certain side of his character. Twice, as has been said, in 1806 and 1807, he had received letters from De Liniers, giving details of the French adventurer's life and mission. The Spaniards in America were as complete a mystery and puzzle to Napoleon as were their compatriots in Spain. With his eye fixed on the dazzling enterprise of securing at a stroke that one of the twenty Spanish viceroyalties in the new world, which by climate, soil and population was far and

away the most desirable, he seemed to have forgotten the measure of a man, gauging others by his own powers. De Liniers, dazzled as he was known to be by the Napoleonic effulgence, was to bring his viceroyalty and lay it at the feet of imperial France at the first notification; who so fit to carry the message as a French royalist rallied to the Empire, and a crony of the viceroy at that? Thought was scarcely swifter than the deed. In such an enterprise no consideration of commonplace human interest could weigh for a moment. No wonder men quailed before such a mind and will, yielding as they must without discussion, but hissing "tyrant" between their shut teeth and closed lips. For seventy days the *Consolateur* tossed on the broad Atlantic before reaching her haven. She was not molested by the much-feared cruisers, but she was sadly driven about by storms. Sassenay had abundant time to ponder his instructions. He was to disembark according to his own judgment wherever the vessel would be safe from capture. He was then to deliver his dispatches to De Liniers, explaining, as if he had been an eye-witness, what had been seen and heard at Bayonne, how delighted the Spanish people were with the prospect of regeneration under Joseph Bonaparte, "what glory environs France and what influence the powerful genius which governs her exerts over Europe for which he lays down the law." He was carefully to observe the effects produced on the authorities by the news of "the happy change wrought in Spain;" to gather all the information possible about Spanish America, including Peru and Chili, if that might be, and to bring back all the knowledge as quickly as possible. Sassenay landed at Maldonado and pressed on to Montevideo, where he found Elio, the governor, on the point of administering to the people the oath of fidelity to Ferdinand VII. To the envoy's suggestion that the governor await the effect of the news from Bayonne at Buenos Ayres, Elio gave a dry refusal. Hurrying breathlessly on, Sassenay reached the capital on August 13, expecting to be received by his old comrade with open arms. Nothing of the sort happened. The envoy of Napoleon was treated with cold formality, left to cool his heels in ante-chambers and finally granted an audience by the viceroy, not alone, but surrounded by his jealous coadjutors. To this assembly, Sassenay read the acts by which Charles IV., Ferdinand VII. and the infantas renounced the Spanish throne, and the dispatches of Champagne in which, with mingled threat and cajolery, Joseph's recognition as king was recommended. To these were appended the formal command of the Spanish ministers and of the Council of Castile, that the oath of allegiance to Ferdinand, previously enjoined by them, should not be administered.

This was the signal for an explosion of anger from the colonial authorities. Sassenay was ordered to leave the country that very night. Liniers succeeded at a later hour in securing a private interview with the envoy: vague hopes of ultimate success for Napoleon's plan were held out, but for the moment, it was explained, nothing could be done. Sassenay must return at all hazards. Accordingly he started at once and reached Montevideo safely. Elio, however, prevented his guest from embarking and held him a virtual prisoner. This was the beginning of disaster for De Liniers. The people of Buenos Ayres, and in fact of the whole viceroyalty, felt the arrival of an envoy from Napoleon to be an interference with their independent action. They were saturated with the influences already recounted, due largely to the recent success of the United States in securing independence, in part to their own efforts in driving away the British invaders. At all hazards they must conduct their own affairs without foreign meddling.

The first proclamation of De Liniers, issued on August 15, set forth that Napoleon's conduct had the hearty support of Spain and begged the colonists to repose confidence in the constituted authority. It was ill received. To recover himself, De Liniers advanced the ceremony of administering the oath of allegiance to Ferdinand by several days and began to abuse Napoleon. This about-face had no effect; the viceroy was now suspected both as being a Frenchman and as sympathizing with the creole party, which desired to rule the natives, to the exclusion of the Spaniards. A revolution broke out in Montevideo, spread to Buenos Ayres, and though held in check by De Liniers for some time, was finally successful, because of events which he could not control. Soon after the national uprising of Spain, the Junta of Cadiz had sent out a new viceroy to replace De Liniers, a certain Cisneros, who had orders to favor the Spanish party, to the exclusion of the native-born, and to send De Liniers back to Spain. Thereupon De Liniers resigned. The new viceroy dared exercise no violence against a man so popular with great numbers in the province as the French Liberator continued to be, and permitted his predecessor to retire as a free man to Cordova in the interior.

The fall of De Liniers was really due to Napoleon's overhaste to seize a great colonial empire; further it was the signal for the revolt which eventually severed Spanish South America from its old allegiance. On May 25, 1810, the incompetent viceroy of the Junta was overthrown by a revolution of those who despised Spain and detested the wretched rule which represented her authority. De Liniers put himself at the head of the royalist party, which he

believed stood for good order, but was betrayed, taken prisoner, and executed, as an enemy of liberty.

Sassenay escaped with his life. He suffered a cruel imprisonment in Montevideo until 1809, when he was sent to Cadiz, and all trace of him was lost to his friends. By the most persistent efforts Mme. de Sassenay secured the ear of Napoleon, who would gladly have forgotten his unlucky agent, obtained the material assistance of a money grant, and sailed for London, where she so ingratiated herself with the great ladies of the court that the British government instituted inquiries about her husband. Not only were the whereabouts of the unhappy man discovered, but at the instance of the British minister he was released and restored to his family.

Thus ended the last of Napoleon's dreams of colonial empire. They were splendid visions one and all, but even heroic minds cannot be ubiquitous, and his was thenceforth fully occupied in the measures essential for his long resistance to the superior strength which overwhelmed him in the end. The recital of these plans in chronological order is not, however, destitute of historical value. On the contrary it proves that while Napoleon actually did throw the French colonial system into bankruptcy, yet it was not his purpose so to do: had he been able to make good his European plans he would have stopped at nothing to plant French empire both in the Far East and on the mainland of both Americas.

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